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# Christian Order

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Paul Crane S J

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## Merely a Tactic

THE EDITOR

I WOULD NOT agree that Kenneth Allen's apologia for quitting the priesthood, which was published in *The Times* last July, was an important document. Father George Telford was near the mark, I think, when, in a letter to *The Times* of July 23rd, he described it as "a blend of eloquence and vagueness, peppered with a grain or two of half-truth, (constituting) a highly effective propaganda technique". Not that Kenneth Allen intended any kind of deception; he had reached the stage, I imagine, when he wrote his piece to *The Times*, where the blurring of doctrinal edges left room only for the predominance of the subjective angle in anything he wrote. I am sure Kenneth Allen wrote with sincerity. This, however, does not lessen the soundness of Father Telford's observation that "the froth of (Allen's) words, whether they mean anything or not, deludes those susceptible of emotive argument, and the skilful admixture of half-truth disconcerts the more objective thinkers".

It does, indeed. Word-spinning is a technique which has been used with great and damaging effect by Progressives within the Church since the closure of the Second Vatican Council. I must quote Father Telford again: "We are

first given the picture of a merciless, monolithic Church, enforcing a rigorous legalism through brainwashed, intransigent officials, intent on preserving the institution, whatever the cost in terms of human misery. This caricature is then starkly contrasted with 'authentic' Christianity—a noble, uninhibited quest for truth, freedom and fulfilment". This puts it perfectly and the question at once arises as to why Progressives should talk this kind of language, why they should be bent on the course of action that leads them to give vent to it. For, as Father Telford said so well in his letter in criticism of Kenneth Allen's apologia, the need for renewal and reform is fully recognised within the Church and the sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council are meant to serve as basic terms of reference for those who wish to achieve both. Everything necessary is there. Why not get on with it then? Why the continued dissent of Progressives within the Church since the closure of the Council?

The cat comes out of the bag in the last paragraph of Kenneth Allen's apologia. He writes, "The Roman Curia succeeded in writing their theology into the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and there is a very active minority within the Church which is bent on restoring the old image of the Roman Catholic Church, with its rigid dogmatic positions, and its intransigent moral teaching". In comment, let me quote, once again, from Father Telford's excellent letter to *The Times*. He puts the issue so much better and more instructively than ever I could. This is what he writes:

"This (complaint of Kenneth Allen) is, presumably, an objection to the fact that all the renewals proposed by the Second Vatican Council are inspired by the Catholic Faith as declared by every preceding council from Nicea to Vatican I.

"It transpires clearly, therefore, that all the criticism of legislation, structure and attitudes (which is sometimes justifiable — even desirable) is merely



a tactic. The real target is the Catholic Faith itself — the destruction of 'its rigid dogmatic positions, and its intransigent moral teaching'. When this has been accomplished, the day of the Secular City will dawn, with all its citizens basking in 'a sense of freedom, and an adult conscience', earnestly engaged in the 'search for what is authentic . . . asking the right questions and seeking the spirit of God in the responsible decisions of life'.

"Like most Catholics, I do not find this sort of language particularly meaningful, but one has the distinct impression that it is merely a complicated way of saying: 'There are no eternal truths and no objective moral norms: everything is relative'. To arrive at this conclusion means inevitably that one's Catholic Faith disintegrates at the roots. All sacred signs, structures and states of life are thereby rendered superfluous, since there are no permanent truths or values for them to enshrine or protect."

It is time we knew our enemy. What we are being subjected to today is neither more nor less than an attack on the essentials of the Faith itself. "The present onslaught upon the Church", writes Father Telford, in the final paragraph of his splendid letter to *The Times*, "is merely the latest and most sophisticated form of many that she has withstood in her history. It may even prove to be the most effective in terms of the damage and suffering it inflicts. The demands made by Catholic Faith can indeed be excruciating at times, and those who preach against it will always find a receptive audience. But despite the Church's many blemishes, weaknesses and blunders, we believe her to be no less than the abiding presence of Christ in the world — and His truth will prevail".

I am most grateful to Father Telford for his letter. My main reason for writing this editorial was to bring its message more closely to the attention of readers.

# Two Films

## 1: *The Ultimate in Entertainment*

CZESLAW JESMAN

TO MY mind, there can be little doubt but that the current excesses of the entertainment world — particularly those associated with visual entertainment in all its forms — have come by way of gross over-reaction to the lifting of moral standards, which ceased to be publicly imposed and upheld in Britain in the sixties. The outlook on life which dictated their public imposition and whose first beginnings many will associate with the puritan revolution in England, is by no means a specifically Anglo-Saxon phenomenon. The Bogomils and Albigensians of an earlier day were “puritan” after their own fashion and so were the French Jansenists, as well as many other perfectionist sects found at various times all over Europe. And not only in Europe; some of Ghandi’s teachings and some of the practices of his disciples would have pleased intensely heretical European perfectionists outside the genuine Christian stream. Zen Buddhism, too, is another still largely unexplored and generally misconstrued line of thought leading in the same direction. At base, this whole line of thinking boils down to old-fashioned Manichaeism, that poisonous and alluring and infinitely attractive delusion, which says that there is an equation between good and bad — both powers being of equal strength — and that, fundamentally, it does not matter whether one opts for the one or the other alternative. The *Hermes Trismegistos*, that odd sacred book of the Alexandrian Gnostics, was yet another interpretation of the same syllogism: man, it said, was after the ultimate and the ultimate was either good or bad, white or black; therefore, it mattered not a hoot whether it was

attained by the good path or the bad. What then, is the ultimate in this context? A mystery, was the answer, a mystery of non-being. Only the French language has its precise, semantic equivalent — *le néant*.

The above is a somewhat heavy introduction, I am afraid, to an article on the current trends in the world of films. In that world, the accent is still on permissiveness. In that world, almost everything goes where sex is concerned. Half a century ago, Freud barely nicked the visible tenth of the submerged iceberg and now, as a result of his temerity, film-makers and goers are choking in a flood of conflicting judgments, emotions and acts which are beyond the capacity of either to understand or control. In the world of films to-day, the idiotic rule of thumb fails most patently to work where sex is concerned: if it did, psychoanalysts would not be enjoying their present boom in Hollywood.

With the end of World War I, the liberal "liberators" proclaimed as self-evident the need to fight what they described as prudery and hypocrisy. Very soon their ideas got tangled hopelessly with Manichean concepts of life. In the film world, censorship was mandatory where the "masses" were concerned; but, for the initiated few, who knew what was what, it was considered unnecessary, since, for them as "educated" men and women, there was no such thing as truth and, of course, no such thing as the devil. All of which, moreover, was good for business; and that clinched the argument. Films, then, were nicely packaged and the Hayes Code, in the United States, was applied with iron consistency, serving, quite unwittingly, as an excellent excuse for a type of film entertainment that lived on sterile titillation by way of innuendo and genteel illusion. The Commandments having been reduced in their minds to two instead of ten, it was quite easy for the secular authorities of the film world to pander on the screen to sins against the other eight with total impunity. The drift continued after World War II. Cruelty, pride, spite, avarice and



bad faith were displayed on the big screen all over the world. The subtle, yet hideous poisoning of minds went on at practically every level. And not infrequently the films which corrupted in this way were highly artistic works of art. They titillated through their artistry, particularly in the field of sex and they proceeded on the assumption that forbidden fruit is invariably commercially sound. Thus the ultimate was never revealed, for it is of the essence of titillation that it should not be: screen audiences never got to the end of the road; they were denied the ultimate depravity of "the real thing".

The technique worked in the fifties, but the sixties showed a change. Film-goers, or at least a vociferous minority led by the *avant-garde* critics and intellectuals, began to make it plain that, if they did not get the ultimate, there would be no money; the clamour was in reality, neo-Manichean. Censorship yielded to it and virtually disappeared; the way was open to the ultimate in entertainment. Unchecked, as it must be, this means death, of the sort enjoyed by depraved Roman audiences as they watched gladiators kill each other in the arena. For them, this was a supremely stimulating experience, better by far than anything Mr. Kenneth Tynan could devise in his own field. To-day, the world of films is concerned increasingly with the ultimate in terms of death and uncontrolled, formless chaos; which need not *be* in reality, as the gladiatorial shows had to *be*, but which can be *seen* (on the screen) to be and have the same depraved effect. Take, for example, a film called *Performance*, which has been having a good run in London. The story is simple. It concerns a fading pop idol in search of new inspiration in seclusion, except for the company of two female acolytes. The three are on pot. Into their midst bursts a gangster thug on the run. The three pervert him; this is the titillation. By way of retribution, of which he is barely aware, the gangster kills his pop

idol host; this is the ultimate. We never learn what happens to the two girls: they are of no more consequence than any other part of the claustrophobic, cluttered scenery.

The point of this revolting film is this, whether the producer was aware of it or not — in it, the transient, considered as eternal, blows up under our eyes. The end is brutal death; this is the ultimate and we are called to witness it by way of entertainment. This is the corrupt beastliness of the whole proceeding. The killing of human beings by way of entertainment for a paying audience is, presumably, incompatible with normal society, even to-day. The one-time Nazi concentration camps and the still flourishing "corrective labour camps" in the Soviet Union were and are phenomena too specialised to obtain general acceptance even in the lands where they have existed and still exist. The West, sophisticated in its depravity, feigns horror at the thought of them; but it wants the ultimate, nevertheless, and it gets it in a film like *Performance*, which gives us killing brutally done as the ultimate in entertainment to please the neo-Manichaeans in our midst.

Doubtless the film was made with an eye to the box office. But it gave away too much, doubtless without knowing it. For the first time the very heart of "swinging London" was exposed for the stone that it is. What you have in that city to-day is no more and no less than a depraved pursuit of the Old Manichaean dream: since flesh is evil and spirit attainable only by the very few, nothing is true and everything is permitted. Let evil, then, have its sway unchecked until it reaches its ultimate in despair and death.

## 2: *World Without God*

*Get Carter* is a commercial film produced in this country and released some months ago for general distribution. It is a minor masterpiece. It was recognised



as such by the London critics. On the whole, however, they did not like it. For them it was too brutal, too direct, with no concessions anywhere. They greeted it with the usual collection of tremulous reservations seasoned with aesthetic trimmings. Not one amongst them dared call a spade a spade — too unspeakably square, my dear; but the reason — the real reason — for this somewhat lukewarm reception of what was an excellent work of factual art stuck like a sore toe out of an embarrassingly torn sock; the film is utterly basic and makes not a single concession to that fashionable and permissive blurring of categories which is current at the present time.

Undoubtedly, the film is a stark portrayal of a brutal, degrading and squalid situation. It is not for the young, those certain to misunderstand it, or the dim. Neither, for that matter, are the masterpieces of Hieronymous Bosch. Working through different media, each of these dissimilar styles of art is equally repellent and attractive at the same time. Each, within its own convention, shows what follows a total rejection of the Infinite and, with it, the last vestige of any kind of sense of awe and reverence. The end of the road, so far as humanism is concerned, is a vicious and totally self-centered society. Hieronymous Bosch, along with the Breughels or, for that matter, any others of the late mediaeval masters, were the fore-runners of contemporary film-makers. They, too, tried to fix the image of their own time in a medium which, conceivably, might perpetuate for others down the centuries the way the years they lived in seemed to them.

The narrative of *Get Carter* is far from simple. A rather repellent thug in London learns of the death of his brother, who drove his car whilst drunk off a quay and drowned himself. An accident? Carter, the black sheep of the family, does not believe it. On the contrary; the Carters of Newcastle-upon-Tyne are not of the stuff that makes suicides; they know nothing of any death-wish, whilst civilization decomposes round about them. They are close, well-knit to each other, ready for life; this is

the way things are with them. So Carter goes to Newcastle to see for himself how and why his "good" brother could be found by the police accidentally dead from drowning, having driven off a quay in a car with a very substantial amount of whisky under his belt.

Hieronymous Bosch himself could have painted the Newcastle Carter knows and the way he takes himself around in it. There are no mincing steps, no effete posturings in the vein of Fellini's *Dolce Vita*. In the Newcastle Carter knows — pubs and docks and all — a spade is called a spade. The rest is fascinating, the credibility of the plot almost unimpeachable. Carter's brother gets a decent, Christian burial and since police and powerful mobsters are determined to consider the case closed, Carter moves in to do some investigating of his own. He has the unrivalled advantage of knowing the place, the people and the air they breathe. The people — all of them — are sorry, squalid and repellent. Yet, unlike the microscopic horrors of Hieronymous Bosch, they are not symbolic figments of the imagination; however absurd they may appear at first glance, they are the products of a real and factual way of life. This is the way it is and, within this context, it seems perfectly natural that the wages of sin are a lush "pad", which has, as essential appurtenances, the viewing of pornographic films in a sickly-sweet haze of marajuanha. How incredibly dull; in the end, how utterly boring. Yet, in the Newcastle Carter knows, there is no sniggering about it and no voyeurism. It's all harsh, functional, ornamental and completely empty of a shred of meaning; a make-up, without sense, of accidental parts of a jigsaw puzzle, like the glossy, vacant-faced girl-friends of the mobsters.

Once back in Newcastle, Carter is on the upswing out of the primeval slime of his childhood environment. He is just as vile as the pack of jackals he is dealing with, but he has a little refinement. His moll he refers to as his "fiancée". He offers also to take care of his niece. In her case, however, he knows it is too late; the

girl, a barely pubescent teenager, is already on the skids. Under the steady, almost immobile eye of Carter, she becomes the key piece in the tragedy. Her father was killed — “accidentally” drowned — to hush up her dishonour. He was a good man and no match for the crafty mobsters at the top. Now Carter moves in bent on revenge. He is equipped superbly to mete out this kind of retribution. He metes it out like a one-man commando of avenging angels. His killings are as brutal and as merciless as that of any mobster, but they are not perpetrated for the sake of some take-over bid. Carter slays to avenge his family's honour and to redress the balance of justice. He acts like a predatory beast in a jungle, but he acts within a context of clearly identifiable law; of his own making, if you like, and not that of the land. There is precious little permissiveness about it. One is reminded of the robber barons of the Middle Ages bringing a measure of justice into the chaos of the post-Roman bedlam, until they themselves, in their own turn, broke or were broken into pieces.

Curiously enough, *Get Carter* is a moral film, almost a parable and, almost certainly, unintentionally so. It is a purely commercial proposition, straining at the seams to deserve its Greater London classification in order to attract an audience, which most certainly will not be looking for moral uplift when it goes to see it.

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### The Hickenlooper Amendment

American firms in Latin America are becoming used to nationalization. In Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Guyana in the past few months American holdings have been seized. Under the 1962 Hickenlooper Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act the President is called upon to suspend American aid to foreign countries that expropriate U.S. holdings without compensation. President Nixon once threatened to get tough with Peru after it seized a subsidiary of Standard Oil; but the threat was not carried out. E.L.W.



This article by John Wisner, ex-paratrooper and editor of a contemporary American newsletter, *Rough Beast*, appears to us to provide a most penetrating insight into some of the forces at work in the American situation at present. It deserves most careful consideration. We are grateful to John Wisner for permission to reprint.

## Philip Berrigan

JOHN WISNER

**PACIFISTS** are common in our country at present. Peace-makers are blessed; but it is never clear whether any particular pacifist is a lover of peace or merely a man who shrinks from trouble. This ambiguity damages the moral worth of pacifists. They refuse rather than assent; and like the devil, they say *non serviam*. They are by and large a negative breed, not much endowed with creative capacity.

In view of these disadvantages it is remarkable what Father Philip Berrigan has been able to accomplish with his energetic pacifism. The mere fact that he is a pacifist at all is remarkable. The position of the Catholics in our Protestant country has always been delicate. To compensate for this there has always been a tendency among Catholics to be more patriotic and nationalist than others. Cardinal Spellman expressed this general Catholic feeling when he set himself up as a leading hawk in Vietnam. Nor is this Catholic patriotism new. For instance an officer known to this writer in the Army in Europe in 1944 was converted to Catholicism when he noticed that the officers who effectively bore the weight of the leadership of his outfit were mostly Catholics. With this warlike tradition among Catholics, what has happened to Father Berrigan?

## *Alien Minority and Dominant Majority*

Peculiar social groups in a nation are always at a disadvantage. They can never grapple directly with the social and political reality around them, because the dominant and orthodox group stands between them and reality. In order to govern their own conduct the subordinate group must always calculate the reactions of the dominant element to the events of history. Often their only contact with reality is the interpretations of it provided by the dominant group. Because of this interference with their contact with reality a subordinate group in society is never really free. Political freedom requires direct contact between reality and the people so that the faith can modify reality and reality can correct the faith. On this account the Catholics, an alien and unorthodox group in our Protestant country, were driven to leading lives of civic virtue, obeying the decisions of the government which they could not criticize and doing their duty. On these terms an alien group is tolerable, although always dangerous, in an organic society well motivated by faith. No one, however, admires or praises the group for their civic virtue. This is not primarily from contempt for the alien people. It is due for the most part to the recognition that the alien people are not close enough to the political and historical realities of the country to have interesting opinions on them. Accordingly a Catholic singing "Hail Columbia" to secure his position in the U.S. has not the same moral force or political meaning as a liberal singing it. However emphatically or loyally an alien group concurs with the social leadership they cannot awaken any feeling among them stronger than indifference. That is what happened to Cardinal Spellman and his hawks. As long as these people accepted the advantages and privileges accruing from the Anglo-Protestant society and its successor, the liberal society, it was their duty to fight for it when they were told; and the country had no reason to be overly grateful for the blood they shed. The Catholics' military prowess and their willingness to subordinate it first to the

ends of Anglo-Protestantism and then to those of liberalism did nothing to modify or even to attract the attention of Protestants or liberals, who continued, unabashed, to look at Catholics as men who were wrong, and who therefore could not play a part in history.

Because an alien group always has to calculate and follow the action of the dominant group in any political situation, they respond more slowly to events than the dominant group; and they are therefore always socially backward. Thus Cardinal Spellman was fighting the war in Vietnam in the same terms with which the war had been fought in Europe twenty years before. But in the meanwhile a change had occurred in the position of the dominant Anglo-Protestants which they certainly could not explain to the Catholics because they could not understand it themselves.

### *Breakdown of Anglo-Protestant Leadership*

The principal change which affected the Anglo-Protestant was the breakdown of their position. The pretension to a raceless society put forward by the Anglo-Protestants against Hitler in 1939 destroyed the many and great advantages of the English race everywhere. One of the things they lost was their position of command and leadership in the U.S. which they had held from the beginning. This was not very good for the Anglo-Protestants, but it was even worse for the country. No country can live without leadership; and the failure of the Anglo-Protestant leadership left the country to drift through history, a derelict. Not having had any responsibility for the history of the Protestant nation, the Catholics could not be blamed for its troubles. It was possible, therefore, at one moment for a pious Catholic to hope that three centuries of innocence and civic virtue would be rewarded by the inheritance of the Anglo-Protestant Empire in North America. But the Vatican Council showed that the spiritual weakness which had brought on the defeat of Europe in 1939-45 was general throughout Christendom, affecting



Catholics and Protestants alike. Moreover, civic virtue is fine; but when it is practised in bondage it does not strengthen the soul. The Catholics, it turned out, did not have the energy or the resources to take over the derelict nation. They could not find the men to occupy the leadership vacuum. Nor could they find the men to interpret reality directly according to the Catholic faith. Finding it impossible to apply Catholic principles directly to the views of reality revealed to them by the disappearance of the Anglo-Protestant leaders, the Catholics desperately tried to return to their old position in the womb of Anglo-Protestant society. Under the leadership of such men as E. Walsh and John Courtney Murray and many liberal priests they sang the praises of the liberal social and political system worked out historically by the Anglo-Protestants; and claimed a place in it. The old callouses developed by three centuries of contact with the Anglo-Protestants were safe and comfortable; whereas everyone knows that direct contact with reality is very dangerous: it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The Anglo-Protestants had shown throughout their history their talent for facing reality. Why should they not continue to relieve the Catholics of this horrid necessity? asked the great liberal Murray. It looked for a moment as if, having been unable to seize the opportunity to break free and make their own history, the Catholics were nailed down forever in the lower classes of the Anglo-Protestant society. Having thus protested their first loyalty to liberalism and adjusted Catholicism to its demands, the Catholics fell back with relief to what they hoped would be their old peace and content.

### *Unable and Unwilling to Lead*

However, it takes more than Catholic loyalty to maintain Anglo-Protestant society. Even more important than the Catholics are the Protestants in a Protestant country. But the Anglo-Protestants are exhausted by the tremendous works they have done in history. Furthermore

they have been morally destroyed by the wars of 1914 and 1939. It takes the consent of the Anglo-Protestants to continue to lead as well as the consent of the Catholics to be led in order to restore the *status quo ante*. But the Anglo-Protestants are unable and unwilling to continue their historic role of leadership. Motive in history is a matter of faith. The faith of the English has diminished successively from Christ to Calvin, to the nation, to the welfare state, and now they believe in nothing. Their leadership in economics vanished in 1929; their military power sank with the *King George V* off the Malay coast in 1942; and their political leadership disappeared with the loss of India. They do not want these things back. The Anglo-Protestants in America, suffering from a certain provincial backwardness and with nostalgia for the departed glory, cannot prevent this retreat from history. Raceless armies led by Catholics cannot restore Anglo-Protestant military power. Our attempt to establish a rump position in the Far East has failed. The tremendous moral, economic and political organization which was created to support the great Anglo-Protestant works in history have become a crushing burden without justification. To get rid of it their intellectual, cultural and spiritual leadership has been preaching revolution, socialism, reform, progress, the casting away of old traditions until now the "Victorian Age," which is the peak of English glory, is a phrase of reproach in English, meaning narrow stupidity. The tradition which holds an ignorant youth in form and directs him to his final end has been broken; and with relief and enthusiasm the Anglo-Protestant youth are attempting radically to escape from Anglo-Protestant culture, and return to the comforts imputed to savagery.

### *Pacifism the Policy of Anglo-Protestant Leaders*

In these circumstances the last convulsions of the Anglo-Protestant world position, carried on by the U.S. in Indochina, appear to be a frightful and unpardonable tyranny. We are not so much concerned about the

injustice to the Indochinese. American indifference to the suffering of others is passably clearly shown by the ashes of Dresden, Hamburg and Hiroshima. It is difficult to believe that a tender American pacifist has any more interest in an Indochinese than in the Germans and Japanese. It is for themselves that the pacifists feel sorry. It is they who suffer from tyranny. By conducting a policy, even a policy of withdrawal, the government contravenes the passionate need and desire for rest of an exhausted people. Hence our college professors and our youth, divided on the question of the utility of study, are as one on the matter of pacifism. Pacifism, the assertion of the will not to serve, is at present the policy of the Anglo-Protestant leaders. That is why the nation has disgraced its own Army and published its own shame in the Calley and other similar cases.

### *Berrigan, Catholicism and Anglo-Protestantism*

If it is true that there are other reasons for pacifism than selective sympathy for the victims of American bombs, then why Father Berrigan is a pacifist is an interesting question. It may be that he is simply a run of the mill Catholic, eager, like Cardinal Dearden and the other bishops, to adjust to the current liberal form of Anglo-Protestant culture. Perhaps he is calling for peace to please the social leadership, as Cardinal Spellman used to call for war for the same reason. Even if that is true the results he gets are very different from those obtained by Spellman. This time the Anglo-Protestant leaders are not proudly looking about for more worlds to conquer, confident in the respectful collaboration of others in their holy work. On the contrary, their pacifism is a refusal to serve; they have no holy historical work to impose respect on others, and any assistance they get can only be freely offered, not submitted as a matter of duty. It excites among them feelings of gratitude and brotherhood. They do not look on Berrigan as a subordinate but as an equal; and they welcome him with open arms. Berrigan has made Catholicism respectable



in a Protestant country. Many secular-liberals who have never mentioned God without a sneer are forced to be polite to him when Father Berrigan is around.

There is more to Berrigan's position than that. Spellman could leave the great decisions of history comfortably in the hands of his Anglo-Protestant social leaders. As long as he was only a subordinate obeying orders, all he had to do was to say his prayers and exhort the Army to do its duty. But a brother, unlike a subordinate, must share in the responsibility and the leadership. If Berrigan merely wanted to adjust to the prevailing secular-liberalism of the Anglo-Protestants, and keep his hereditary station in our society, like a commonplace liberal Catholic, then he has overshot the mark. It may be desirable to enforce respect for God; but, if you do, you must exercise freedom, responsibility and self-respect, just those things which the Catholic followers of the liberal and Protestant leadership are so anxious to avoid. If Berrigan is an unconscious innocent, then his situation shows that any attempt of the Catholics to avoid responsibility by clinging to the liberal superstitions of the Anglo-Protestant nation defeats itself. The Anglo-Protestant society being in a state of dissolution, a retreat to its womb is no protection against reality.

### *Is Philip Berrigan Opposing Protestant Error?*

There is, however, a chance that Berrigan is not an unconscious innocent. The pacifism of our intellectual and moral leaders and of our youth is essentially a rejection of and a final attack on the last remnants of the Anglo-Protestant position in the world. The enemy (if he is an enemy) says that the Indochina War is a colonial enterprise, a characteristic Anglo-Protestant undertaking. No one has more horror of colonialism at present than our pacifist social leaders, certainly not the North Vietnamese, who have mixed feelings for and friendly relations with the French. When Berrigan comes to the help of our pacifists, what he is doing is attacking Anglo-Protestantism, just as they are. This is certainly a curious position for a Catholic

trying to adjust to the modern secular-liberal world. With great energy and many protestations our Catholics assure us that they have given up their bad old ways. They reject the Inquisition which was only interested in the defense of truth, not of freedom. Like every liberal who drinks from Puritan John Milton's fount of liberty, they now believe that every man has a right to his own opinion, no matter how much of a fool or a scoundrel he may be. But, although Berrigan's attack on the Army of the Protestant nation seems odd in a liberal Catholic, it seems perfectly natural and proper in a Catholic who only wants to defend his faith. It is the business of Catholics to oppose Protestant error. No sooner is the Reverend Berrigan relieved of the restraining weight of the Anglo-Protestant society than, resuming his natural form of a good Catholic, he sets off to attack it.

### *Men not Afraid to be Free*

But if Berrigan is acting like a Catholic and wants to exterminate the remains of Protestant and liberal error in North America, then it is necessary for him, and others like him, to accept what J. C. Murray and E. Walsh refused, that is, liberty and responsibility. Perhaps we are seeing in Berrigan a Catholic able to support the responsibilities of liberty? If so, then the future of Catholicism in North America suddenly appears to be brighter than at any time since the death of Pius XII. If feeble Catholics cannot adjust to the corpse of Protestantism and liberalism, they must be available for other better social solutions. If they are capable of throwing up men not afraid to be free, that is, real leaders capable of making policies which bear immediately on reality and not through someone else's interpretation of it, then perhaps they are about to escape from the American bondage as the Hebrews escaped from the bondage of Egypt.

The great strength of Pius XII's position was that he offered a plausible view of reality to people who had had all views of reality crushed out of them by the misfortunes

of history. The Vatican Council failed to take advantage of this situation, and made an accommodation with the world. But if Catholics in America or elsewhere can throw up men who make their own interpretations of history and reality without advice from Protestants or secularists, who will worship their own God without trying to adjust Him to another God, then, as Berrigan forces respect for God on his secular friends, so Catholicism can force respect for religion on the irreligious. It is certainly true that the failure of all our superstitions, our liberalism, corporate capitalism, secularism, democracy, rationalism, etc. makes it very useful to have at hand a system of reality which shows signs of life.

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### Michael Collins on Ulster

"This is a case which can be settled by Irish men. By force we could beat them perhaps, but perhaps not. I do not think we could beat them morally. If you kill all of us, every man and every male child, the difficulty will still be there. So in Ulster. That is why we do not want to coerce them." But, the Big Fellow added, if the Southern Catholics did not want to coerce the Northern Protestant minority, the Northern Protestants must not be allowed to possess the power to coerce the Northern Catholic minority. But they were given the power, and the price has been appalling. E.L.W.



## CURRENT COMMENT

This month Father Crane offers his reflections on a book written by a Dutch author, Wim Hornman, which tells in novel form the story of Father Camilo Torres. The book is entitled *The Rebel Priest* and is published by Collins at £2.00. It raises extremely important issues, above all that which concerns the relationship between the Church and the poor. This is considered at length by Father Crane in the article below.

# Reflections on a Rebel Priest

## THE EDITOR

**WIM HORNMAN**, a Dutchman who has travelled much in South America, has set out recently in novel form the story of Camilo Torres, the priest-rebel shot in ambush by troops of the Colombian Government on February 15th, 1966 and, since that shooting, a hero in the eyes of Latin America's young.

### *Dates in a Life*

Camilo Torres was ordained in 1954. Very soon after ordination he went to study sociology at the University of Louvain where he was sent by Cardinal Luque of Bogota. He returned to Colombia in 1959 as chaplain to students at the National University. There, he was joint founder of the department of sociology in which he was given a professorship. Whilst there, his support for student

strikes brought him into conflict with Cardinal Luque's successor, Cardinal Concha of Bogota, who called on him to resign his university appointments. Father Torres complied, but continued with his campaign for social justice. His programme of social reform for his country's United Front, which looked to him as leader, was published on March 17th, 1965. He was forbidden to preach any more on that same day and laicized some months later on June 28th. He joined the guerilla National Liberation Front on October 18th, 1965 and was killed in ambush on February 15th, 1966.

### *The Church and the Poor*

These dates and the events leading up to them are worth keeping in mind. Around them Wim Hornman has written his novel. I found it fascinating and, on the whole, balanced in its presentation of the issues which confronted Camilo Torres during the seven short years of his active life, first as a priest and then, once again, as a layman. Basic to them all, I would suggest, is that which concerns the Church in her relationship to society in general and, in particular, the dispossessed and the poor. Are these meant to be her *direct* and *primary* concern? Is her *first charge* that of working for justice in their regard? If so, then the whole of her resources should be placed at their disposal, directed to the improvement of their lot; and those priests are, indeed, right who today see their vocation as taken up wholly with the pursuit of social justice and nothing more. Such a priest is Antonio Valencia (alias Camilo Torres), the priest-hero of Hornman's book: "I profess Christianity", he writes in his last manifesto "because I look upon it as the purest form of service to my fellow-men. I was called by Christ to become a priest for all time, eternally dedicated to my fellows". The language is a flowery version of that used today, for example, by men and women religious in America as they desert the class-room for the "inner-city", abandoning their teaching posts to get the feel of Skid Row and work

for the material uplift of the poor. If their care is her prime task, what are Sisters doing teaching the daughters of the bourgeoisie? The same thought may have been in the mind of the Mexican Jesuits who decided some months ago to close their expensive and fashionable private school in Mexico City and open a series of schools with tuition fees so low that the poorest could afford to send their children to them. A remark made by the Mexican Jesuit Provincial is of significance in this context. He said he and his colleagues had decided to close their fashionable school because "in order to place ourselves at the service of the poor we must sever our links with the power structure" (presumably by not teaching the children of its members). If the Church's *prime* task is the pursuit of social justice, the Mexican Jesuits are indeed correct, to say nothing of those other religious who are abandoning institutionalized life to share their lives with the dispossessed. It follows that they, too, are right who urge the Church now to deinstitutionalise herself and be done with structures that set what they think of as a yawning credibility gap between herself and the poor. If, however, the Church's *prime* task is *not* with social justice, then the contemporary philosophy of concern, which bids her sacrifice all to its pursuit, is wrong and the growing activity at present flowing from it, productive very likely of more harm than good. It could well be that nowadays a whole heritage is being destroyed in bogus or, better, misplaced (because mis-based) service of the poor. The question is one of perspective and proportion. Both, I think, have been lost sight of by those in the Church today, however generous their intention, who share what *s*, in essence, a new version of an old materialism.

### *The Church Offers Men the Means of Salvation*

What one has to say bluntly but very surely is that the *primary* purpose of the Church is not the pursuit of social justice in the interests of the poor, but the extension to all men through all ages of the fruits of Christ's

redemption: she was founded by Christ to offer men the means of salvation. Her primary concern, therefore, is not with their material condition, not, therefore, with the poor and poverty as such; but that all men — rich as well as poor — should share life in Christ and, with it, true *poverty of spirit*, which recognises that, in comparison with God's gift of supernatural life, material goods are as nothing. Their true value is in their relationship to the life of the spirit; their superfluity blinding the eye of the rich to it and their absence breaking the spirit of the poor so that they cannot be open to it. It is in this indirect, secondary and relative sense that the Church is concerned with man's material condition; insofar, that is, as it affects the life of grace in his soul. Her mission is to place it there and to encourage it, when planted, to come to fullness. Her concern is with the wholeness which grace alone can bring to a human being; with material goods or their absence in so far as wholeness is affected.

### *The New Materialism*

It is a far call from this to Wim Hornman's hero-priest, Antonio Valencia (alias Camilo Torres), who saw his *basic* task as a priest as that of bringing betterment directly to the poor. This is the new materialism, which besets so many young students and religious in the Church today, who seek the relief of poverty, not primarily that grace may enter, but for its own sake and at a level that makes them little more than social workers; easy co-operators with men of all creeds and none in a lowest-common-denominator type of Christianity that appears content to do good without God, and is, in fact, little more than Social Humanism. Under the impulse of this creed the Church is sustaining exceedingly heavy losses at the present time. There are the priests and religious who, having set their outlook and their lives at the level of social work for its own sake, abandon their vocation to become social workers. And there is the abandonment now, particularly



by the religious orders, of so many specifically Christian institutions, which used to be centres of grace, on the ground that, provided they are set to the service of the poor or the community, it matters little who runs them. Those who speak in these terms — and there appear to be many religious who do so today — seem to me to have lost sight completely of their vocation as active religious in the world. As religious, they are concerned basically and essentially with bringing new life to men, as Christ himself was. Everything else they do is ancillary to this central purpose. Unless it is seen as such, their lives lose perspective and their work is reduced to the level of a somewhat aimless community service and little more.

### *The Old Materialism*

At the other extreme, of course, are those who uphold the status quo for its own sake. Without regard for the life of grace in their own souls, they are unable, in consequence, to realise the extent to which destitution has driven it from the lives of the poor whom they regard as no more than objects of occasional almsgiving. This is the old materialism — of a Catholic land-owning and business class in South America, for example, willing partners to an unjust status quo and wedded to its outsize possessions as of absolute worth in themselves; blinded by riches to the working of grace in its soul, devoid, that is, of poverty of spirit; without appreciation of grace, without recognition, in consequence, of the evil of destitution as blocking its flow in others; without concern, on this ground, for the poor. This is the tragedy, particularly of South America and similar societies — the Philippines, for example — today. It is brought out, by implication at least, in the pages of Wim Hornman's book. The tragedy is not one primarily of destitution, but of a people — rich and poor alike — who are devoid of poverty of spirit because without understanding of

grace. Neither rich nor poor in the Colombia of Camilo Torres knew what the other lacked. The fight between them was purely for material possessions as desirable in themselves alone and Camilo did the poor no good by keeping it at that level. As a priest he should have placed it within the context of the supernatural and that, precisely, is what he failed to do. Under such circumstances, Camilo Torres' struggle on behalf of his country's poor was, at the very outset, wrenched out of its essential context as a means to supernatural life and reduced to the level of an end in itself, unrestrained — as it was bound to be under such circumstances — by spiritual principle. It was inevitable, therefore, that the forces he had summoned to his assistance should crush him, even if he won the day against his country's rich and was technically successful in his bid for power on behalf of the poor. His revolution, like others fought on similar terms, would eat its own children. The reason is clear enough: there is no limit to material desire unleashed for its own sake. The tragedy of Camilo Torres, even had he been victorious, would have been that of a man trying to fight one form of materialism with another. In the end, the forces he had helped unleash would have hammered him into the ground and the poor he had helped to victory on their own unprincipled terms would have found themselves in receipt of no more than an exchange of servitudes. To the extent that the philosophy of involvement — so fashionable in religious circles within the Church today — comes to mean in effect the diversion of the Church from her essentially supernatural mission, so that material means to supernatural goals are sought for their own sake, involvement in practice will mean the absorption of the Church by the world in this sense, that priests and religious who adopt this false philosophy will become almost wholly secularised, living their lives at the level of the material, faithless therefore to their vocation which is, precisely, to place all within the context of grace, which is God's gift to man.

### *Priestly Life at a Naturalist Level*

On reflection, what disturbed me particularly in Wim Hornman's book was the secularist or, better, naturalistic level at which the lives of Antonio Valencia (alias Camilo Torres) and his friend, the Dutch priest-professor Vermeer, were so effortlessly set. They differed, so far as I could see, not with regard to the goal they sought, but in their choice of means whereby their purely materialist goal of material betterment for its own sake could best be attained. Had I not known they were priests, I would have taken Father Torres and his priest-friend for a couple of well-intentioned, idealistic, and indeed courageous humanists. I would not have guessed they were priests or, indeed, Christians for, in the pages of Hornman's book, reference to God or the supernatural is rarely, if at all, on their lips. The impression given throughout — brilliantly, if unintentionally, by the author — is of two good men working at the level of the natural to remove social ills. I found this not merely disturbing, but immensely depressing; certainly, not of the Church as Bernanos' *Country Priest* and, indeed, Graham Greene's whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* were both—each in his own way — utterly of the Church because each in full recognition of his utter dependence on God and his powerlessness without grace to serve Him. Both felt the need for God and gave constant witness to that need in their far from perfect lives. Hornman's two priests, by contrast, seemed quite oblivious of this need. Their lives were enclosed in the natural. Worldly in the worst sense of the word, contented in their self-containment, they appear in the pages of his book as without regard for the working of grace in their lives; without any realization of their own immense need for it. Reading their conversations, listening to them discussing their plans, I felt that, had Christ Our Lord come in to them as they spoke together, they would not have gone on their knees before Him, merely offered Him a Martini and given Him the privilege of listening to what they had to say.

## *Salt Without its Savour*

Are others like this today? I fear a good many tend to be. One senses no longer the working of the supernatural in their lives. I am thinking particularly of religious who have carried demythologization to the point where they have desupernaturalized their lives. One used to be able to sense God's presence in a religious house. In all too many cases now one feels it is no longer there. The sadness of such occasions is almost unbearable. Within such a house one feels no longer within the Church. Yet the salt is meant to be here. If it loses its savour, what of the rest of the Church. Or, to change the metaphor, if the leaven becomes less than lump, what becomes of the lump itself. If those meant to bring new life to men are themselves without appreciation of it — content, instead to live their lives on a secular plane — they will be absorbed by their material surroundings and those they have failed will be absorbed, in the end, along with them. Where this occurs the world will have overcome the Faith, as it bids fair to do already within certain of Christianity's sectors in the West.

## *Unprincipled Pursuit of Utopia*

This, then, is the thing that strikes me so distastefully about the priest-hero of Hornman's book; it is as a priest that he is so unconvincing and the reason is found in his seeming unawareness of the need for grace in face of the increasing domination of the natural over all sectors of his life. With this there goes a mounting passion for instant utopia that comes very naturally to those who make of material betterment a goal to be pursued for its own sake, out of true context as a means because unrelated to man's overall, supernatural destiny. By the same count, the means set to serve the goal of material betterment for its own sake become increasingly unprincipled in face of the mounting frustration encountered in its pursuit. The priest-reformer who gets his priorities wrong in the first place, who seeks first the political kingdom because



impatient of the restraint set by prime concentration on that which is heavenly, will become increasingly unrestrained in his selection of means to secure his purely earthly goal. It should surprise no one that Antonio Valencia, the priest-hero of Hornman's book—or, indeed, Camilo Torres himself—passed so easily and so rapidly to violence in pursuit of his objective. And he passed even more easily because of the naivete of his approach to the concrete problems associated with effective social reform. It was inevitable, under such circumstances, that frustrations should come thick and fast to the priest-reformer. Most, in fact, were of his own making; offspring of his ignorance of men and affairs. It is, I am afraid, usually the case with men like Antonio Valencia that failure to recognise their failure as the fruit essentially of their own naivete makes them still more extreme in their choice of means to secure their goal and leads some of them in the end to seek bogus martyrdom in a shooting match. This is what Hornman's priest-hero did; this may have been what Camilo Torres did. He was laicized on June 26th, 1965 and killed by government troops in an ambush on February 15th in the following year.

### *Charismatic Shadow-Boxing*

I hope this analysis will not be thought harsh. It is made in charity to the Faithful in the Catholic Church who are, understandably, confused by the example of Camilo Torres and, in particular, to the young clerics of South America who are inclined far too lightly to follow it. However subconsciously, the bogus charism of "rebel priest" is adopted by too many of them nowadays as a substitute for the immensely hard, painstaking and ceaseless work that is essential to effective radical social reform in South America or, for that matter, anywhere else. Neither Camilo Torres, nor the Berrigan Brothers, nor Père Cardonnel, nor any other cleric or nun in the same line of business does anyone a scrap of good when — on the basis of an analysis of the socio-political scene that

is ludicrous in its infantilism — they use word or example to summon unthinking Christians to a line of action that it would be the understatement of all time to describe as naive beyond belief. Too many so-called charismatic figures in the Church today — prophetic witnesses as they like to think of themselves — are unacquainted, quite simply, with the basic facts of life and the elementary courtesies without which even the beginnings of an approach to a civilized existence would be quite impossible. The absence of both from their lives enables them to adopt a stance, which a civilized man of reasonable intelligence would regard, quite rightly, as unbearable. And the young clerics and religious who follow these charismatic types and adopt their folksey, ill-mannered and often violent ways do so very often because they are without the guts to apply themselves in earnest and in the light of God's grace to the problems which beset mankind. I find them devoid for the most part of any real power of applied concentration. They are often totally unreliable and without any marked vestige of administrative ability. Yet, they have tended to take the stage, particularly within the religious orders of the Church, since the end of the Second Vatican Council. Their performance on the whole has been a bad one, shadow-boxing and nothing more.

### *Need for Today*

The greatest disservice they have rendered, perhaps, is in their ignorant and false identification of renewal and true radicalism with gimmickry; seeing life, as the adolescent always does, in terms solely of black and white; limiting effective social action, in consequence, to brainless assaults on what they call the Establishment and nothing more. In this they have been encouraged by a sycophantic Catholic Press and by the weakness of Superiors, ignorant too often of the issues that confront the world, unwilling to seek or receive advice concerning them and lacking in the qualities of leadership necessary to bring their subjects to work in disciplined fashion at their solution. The need

more than ever today is for Bishops and Religious Superiors in the Church who see life essentially in supernatural terms and are possessed of the courage and authority they must have if they are to pass this vision to their subjects and bring them, with firmness and understanding, to adopt it as their own.

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### Schools of Infidelity

Writing of the Church just before the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, Newman says in his *Idea of a University* :

"The acutest intellects became sceptics and mis-believers; and the head of the Holy Roman Empire, the Caesar Frederick the Second, had the reputation of meditating a profession of Mohammedanism. It is said that, in the community at large, men had a vague suspicion of each other's belief in Revelation. *A secret society* was discovered in the universities of Lombardy, Tuscany and France, organized for the propaganda of infidel opinions; it was bound together by oaths and sent its missionaries amongst the people . . . The University of Paris was obliged to limit the number of its Doctors in Theology to as few as eight, from misgivings about the orthodoxy of its divines in general.

"Frederick the Second established a University at Naples with a view to the propagation of the infidelity which was so dear to him" (Ch. 5, 2).

A thumbnail sketch of the relevant history of Ulster, the price of gelignite in Dublin, the crowd guns being made in Belfast factories, and a few of the many alternatives before Mr. Heath, Mr. Lynch, and Mr. Brian Faulkner are outlined in this article by E. L. Way.

## Sackcloth for Ulster

E. L. WAY

**D**ESPITE the yawns and the glazed eyes, tell-tale stigma of boredom, a thumbnail sketch of the relevant history of Northern Ireland must begin this article. Ignorance here precludes understanding, doesn't unfortunately prevent angry disputation, and makes many solutions completely unworthy of attention.

Ulster was colonised, 'planted' with Scots Protestants in the reign of James I as a deliberate act of policy so that the domination of an alien people might be maintained. The Ulsterman was a special breed so that Lord Rosebery could say, perhaps after a Lodge night's drinking: "I love Highlanders, and I love Lowlanders, but when I come to the branch of our race that has been grafted on to the Ulster stem I take off my hat in veneration and awe." (Ah well we all have our moments.) Breathlessly we leap over a couple of generations and come to the ineffable James II, dethroned in England and besieging the Protestants in Derry. When one of his regiments approached, the famous "Thirteen Apprentice Boys" locked the gates and thereby encouraged the City Fathers to declare for the Protestant William of Orange. The siege of Derry continued for three months, and ten thousand inhabitants died of starvation and disease. Finally King Billy raised



the siege and defeated James 'on the green grassy slopes of the Boyne'. The "Twelfth of July" celebrates this 'famous victory' of 1690 when the Protestants were delivered from "Fenians and from Papists vile". The Penal Times followed when Irish trade was destroyed, heavy rates and taxes imposed, and the practice of Roman Catholicism forbidden.

### *Home Rule*

Ireland that ought to have been a mother country to an empire which was not altogether an ignoble enterprise ended up as a colony. And naturally was the first in the fight for Home rule. Men died for it; they killed for it —for a United Ireland governing itself. At last Westminster heard; but towards the end of the 19th century the Protestants began to oppose the idea vigorously. They were prepared to set up their own government in the nine counties which really constitute Ulster, but when it came to fixing boundaries they realised that there would be too many Roman Catholics for voting convenience. And so they settled for the six: County Antrim, County Down and County Derry (with Protestant majorities), and Counties Fermanagh, Armagh and Tyrone (these last three less Protestant). The new Ulster was prepared to defy Westminster and in 1913 Carson produced his Ulster Volunteer Force and bought from the Kaiser 24,600 German rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition. On 20 March 1914 at Curragh Camp, under Gen. Hubert Gough, the officers tendered their resignations as a protest against the likelihood of their being sent under orders from the Parliament at Westminster to enforce Home Rule upon N.E. Ulster. Westminster capitulated.

Once the boundary was drawn (one of the most ridiculous frontiers in the world that passes through some houses leaving the front door in one country and the back door in another) the Catholic minority — about 500,000 in a population (1966 census) of 1,484,775 — were ordered by some Protestants not to go to work.

They did in Belfast and some were thrown in the docks, 15 Catholics were killed, 68 seriously injured and 161 homes were gutted by fire. Between 1920 - 1922 267 Catholics were killed and 185 Protestants. 'Religious' warfare continued throughout the 1930s. "They are all Irish", wrote Patrick O'Donovan, "all cursed by their history . . . . still working out the destiny ordained by one of the most tragic of national stories. For this, under God, the English must bear the blame . . . . ." Surely Ulster is one of the darkest chapters in recent Christian history.

### *Special Powers Act*

The Special Powers Act, in force now under Brian Faulkner, is a concentrated mass of repressive measures. Vorster of South Africa expressed his envy in 1963 of those who could use the powers it contains. He stated at the time that he would gladly swap all his own measures for one clause of the Act as applied in Ulster. (The first of the internees in Ulster were significantly members of the Civil Rights Association.) Under this Act British citizens in Ulster can be arrested without warrant, denied recourse to law, refused trial by jury and, if killed, the right of an inquest is denied to the relatives. The Act contravenes 22 of the 30 Articles in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights; and its use in Northern Ireland has prevented Britain from signing the European Convention of Human Rights. And in addition there are the B Specials generally recruited from old established Orange families.

### *Internment*

The internment policy is one-sided. Men like Paisley, and his lieutenant William Beattie, Craig, and John Taylor all ought to be locked up. (They could hold discussion groups with their opposite numbers in the Crumlin Road jail or on HMS Maidstone.) But who were in fact interned? About 50 members of the Civil Rights Association, and a similar group from the People's Democracy. Not a

single officer in the command of the Belfast Brigade of the Provisionals was caught. About 4 hours before the raid the information leaked out to the IRA as to what was afoot. But an 'old boy' in his 60s — Mr. Charles Fleming — who had been an active member of the IRA in a previous generation was led away, while his son of the same name was left asleep in his bed upstairs. In the same category was Mr. Liam Mulholland who is in Crumlin Road jail; he was first interned in 1929. The RUC intelligence is obviously out of date. (They will be looking for Kevin Barry next.) Mr. Gerry Fitt, leader of the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party) was bitterly disappointed that the interment orders were signed in Northern Ireland. "How can we talk about responsible participation (in the Maudling round of talks) while our constituents are interned?" Internment was and may remain a major setback to hopes of a 'new deal'. Perhaps it was to damn these hopes that the policy was used in the first place.

### *Jelly and Crowd Guns*

The amount of gelignite used in the bombing attacks this year has been estimated by the disposal experts of the Royal Ordnance Corps as follows: in January the total was about 120 lbs, in August it had risen to 1,400 lbs and is still rising. The September figure is expected to reach 1,800 lbs. In September explosions in Belfast were heard every few hours. And in the last 2 years the authorities have received 6,600 claims for riot damage asking for a total of £16½ million. (This does not include damage to public property.) The gelignite can be purchased for about 17-18 new pence a lb from Irish Industrial Explosives in Dublin. Explosives and detonators also come from ICI factories in Scotland. The detonators carry no mark or number which could enable them to be traced. The nail bombs are made up of a stick of gelignite wrapped in corrugated cardboard filled with nails and a length of fuse.

On the other side, the Protestants hold almost 100,000 guns. Official licences for 98,000 gun licences belong to Protestants who are members of 'sporting gun clubs'. Shipments of arms, it is thought, have also been smuggled in from England and Scotland. Businessmen have handed in as much as £1,000 for arms. A type of sten gun is also being manufactured illegally in Belfast. The northern editor of the *Irish Press*, Mr. Vincent Brown, was arrested after he had obtained one of these guns from the IRA as evidence. The factories where these guns are being made are known but so far neither the army nor the police have followed up Brown's tip. The weapons are clumsy, inaccurate automatics on the sten gun principle: 18 inches long, and with a limited life as the piping forming the barrel is of soft metal. There are said to be 2,000 ready for action on crowds — they are so inaccurate as to be useless for anything else. But even if we discount this story as an invention of the IRA (Brown's story was taken seriously) there remains the official figure of 35,000 of the current gun licences issued between 1968 and March 1971 to Protestants.

### *The Alternatives*

It could be civil war. The position in September is very similar to the position in Cyprus: with approximately the same ratio of political and 'religious' contestants. In Cyprus Britain agreed to bring in the U.N. The logical step in Northern Ireland would be to do the same. But pride will prevent this. A complete withdrawal of British troops would result in the destruction of the Catholic community. With Bangla Desh in mind we could scarcely be so callous or so stupid. Any Irish intervention from the South would result in the annihilation of the 200,000 Catholics in the Lagan River valley. They are isolated; they are hostages.

The Orange Order and the Provisional IRA have made an attempt to break every Prime Minister in Northern Ireland since the day when Captain O'Neill secretly met



Mr. Lemass in Stormont in 1966 to prepare the way for the entry of Ireland into the Common Market (Heath also expects Ulster Unionist support in the House of Commons debate in October for his hoped for majority for entry into EEC). The army must deal with the Unionists as it does with the Catholics. It must totally disarm the whole population — Protestant and Catholic. Mr. Lynch must repudiate and expel the crackpots from his Republican party. Open appeals for arms, advertisements and the like, and Mr. Cahill's performances must be stopped. One thing seems obvious if the Orange Order and the IRA bring down Brian Faulkner direct rule from Westminster is almost certain. And Faulkner can use that as a trump card to drive hard bargains with his followers in the Cabinet, Parliament and in Ulster.

Some things are perfectly clear. The Republic of Ireland could not cope with a million Protestants dragged into union against their wills. Ulster cannot survive as an Independent Republic: the £100 million annual subsidy from Westminster is absolutely essential. So Britain could say: We will give you a year to reach agreement. If you agree you get the subsidy; if you don't you will not receive a penny. There could be a nominal Irish union with federal status, which would allow the commercial connection with Britain to be kept. The South would heave a sigh of relief and grant almost any federal powers to bring about 'unity'. Some faces would not be saved — but that would be much better than having them blown off.

### *Time running out*

In a recent survey of attitudes, political and religious, in Northern Ireland the most frightening fact to emerge was that 52 per cent of the Protestants endorsed the use of any methods to keep the country Protestant. Amongst Catholics 13 per cent only thought that any methods could be used to end partition. The educational structure was unpopular with 85 per cent of all those questioned in the interviews. They were in favour of Catholic and

Protestant children being educated together. "God watches over what each person thinks and does" was the belief of 86 per cent of Ulster people. What He would think of an army of Protestants marching up the Falls Road, or on the Catholics of the Lagan River Valley, or of the Provisionals buying jelly at 17 pence the lb in Dublin was not disclosed. Westminster could prevent the situation turning into a bloody civil war. Westminster must act with *justice*, with courage, and with speed.

Since the above was written the position has worsened. All attention has been turned to the putting down of terror. As we know terror can drive out terror. In the past murderous campaigns of the IRA have been terminated. But they will spring up again unless the Catholics of Northern Ireland cease to be second-class citizens.

The pressure on Brian Faulkner continues and he may soon be faced with the resignations of men like Harry West, Minister of Agriculture, and John Taylor (Minister of State), both hard-line Unionists. The decision to resign will probably come when Brian Faulkner completes his consultative document with its offer of a small measure of participation to Catholics. If West and Taylor go it would not be long before Captain John Brooke also resigns. And then Faulkner will have to go. He has not been forgiven for agreeing to meet the Irish Prime Minister, Jack Lynch, in the rather useless talks held at Chequers, where it seems that little but internment was discussed.

The refusal to pay rates and rents by 90 per cent of Catholics in some areas has been rendered null by two new laws which permit the debts to be collected out of wages, supplementary benefits and family allowances. But the campaign of civil disobedience will be stepped up; and people will be urged to stop paying mortgages, hire-purchase payments and television licences. Direct rule from Westminster with all its appalling difficulties may not be far off.

# Truly Human

FRANCIS FENN, S.J.

IN my last article I quoted the opinion of an economist that the present rate of economic growth in the Western world cannot continue. An ever-increasing rise in the standard of living among people who already have far more than the necessities of life is not only undesirable as an aim, but impossible of achievement. (I wonder how many *dissatisfied* people there are among the frequenters of British public houses who, in the first four months of this year, consumed over three thousand million pints of draught beer at a cost to themselves of over £450 million? And this was some £30 million more than in the same period of 1970!)

When people find out that their standard of living cannot go on rising indefinitely, where are they going to turn for new aims, a new direction in life? It is here (supposing our economists prediction to be correct) that Christians will have a new opportunity, an urgent responsibility to meet a human need — since man must have *some* goal at which to aim. The practical atheism of so many people today is no doubt due, in part at least, to the all-out quest for material goods. Do we, then, want well-paid people to become poorer so that they may turn to God? This, in any case, might not have the desired effect: what we want people to see is that this all-absorbing quest is not a truly human one. We want them to understand not only the necessity (should this arise) but also the desirability of taking a new direction.

This is not primarily a question of religion, or even of ethics, though our own understanding of the matter will certainly be based upon our Christian faith. Let me

give an example which is relevant in view of what we were considering in my last article. In his Apostolic Letter of May 14 this year, issued in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* ("The Workers' Charter"), Pope Paul said that "man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it." Now although these words were written by the Vicar of Christ, a man does not need to be converted to the Christian faith or to accept Christian ethical standards in order to understand the truth of what the Pope is talking about. There may well be theological and ethical aspects of this "ill-considered exploitation" (it is God's gift to us that we risk destroying), but basically it is a matter of ordinary human wisdom — or the lack of it. I say "ordinary human wisdom", though I would contend that wisdom is itself the gift of God, and that if people use this gift it "gently attracts the mind of man to a quest and a love for what is true and good", to quote the Vatican Council. It can lead people to Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ. (See the last book of the Old Testament, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 8,21 & 9,9-10.)

An example of Christian wisdom applied to economic affairs may be found in the broadcast message of Pope Pius XII for the 50th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, given on Whitsunday 1941 :

"A nation's economic wealth does not lie in an abundance of goods valued by purely material reckoning; it lies in this, that the abundance both represents and really provides in practice a sufficient material foundation for the proper personal development of the citizens. Should such just distribution be unachieved or but half achieved, the true aim of the nation's economy would be defeated; however abundant the store of goods in hand, the people, cut off from access to it, would economically be not rich but poor. Where, on the other hand, just distribution is really achieved and maintained, you will see a nation which, even with fewer goods to

go round, will become and be economically healthy." Once more, there is nothing in this statement which could not be accepted by any man of goodwill. But it is time to ask the question *why* the Popes make statements on matters of this kind. Speaking on May 16 this year in the homily at the *Rerum Novarum* anniversary Mass, the Holy Father said :

"For the Pope (i.e. Leo XIII) it was not a question of the kingdom of this world, of politics . . . it was a question of the men who compose this kingdom . . . of the criteria of wisdom and justice that must inspire it."

Man, and man in society, is the subject of all the Church's social teaching. As the Council said in its constitution on the Church in the modern world :

"Man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on each other. For the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person, which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 25).

And not merely the material well-being of man, but the whole man :

"The fundamental purpose of productivity must not be the mere multiplication of products . . . . . Rather, it must be the service of man, and indeed of the whole man, viewed in terms of his material needs and the demands of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life" (*ibid.*, no. 64).

This is the same as to say, with Pope Paul in *Populorum Progressio* (1967), that "development cannot be limited to mere economic growth . . . it has to promote the good of the whole man" (no. 14). The Pope spells out stages of "a development which is for each and all the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human" :



"Less human conditions are the lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essential for life; the moral deficiencies of those who are mutilated by selfishness; oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions. Conditions that are more human are the passage from misery towards the possession of necessities, victory over social scourges, the growth of knowledge, the acquisition of culture. Additional conditions that are more human are increased esteem for the dignity of others, the turning towards the spirit of poverty, co-operation for the common good, and will and desire for peace. Conditions that are still more human are the acknowledgment by man of supreme values, and of God their source and finality. Conditions that, finally and above all, are more human are faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ, who calls us all to share in the life of the living God, the Father of all men" (no. 21).

Whereas Leo XIII was writing about the condition of workers in the earlier stages of Western industrialisation, Paul VI is speaking especially about the "under-developed" nations of the world. But both look at man in his totality, as he actually is—ordered to a supernatural end which itself can only be known through Christian revelation. Only when men have attained this end will they be completely human. What sort of society do they need to live in so that they may attain this end? The answer is what we call "Catholic social doctrine", the substance of which holds good everywhere and in every age, though it has constantly to be re-applied on account of changing social conditions. "The social question" at any particular time is enquiry into the shortcomings of the present social order, so that it may be improved (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26). It should not be necessary to add that this

present order of society has its own real value; it is not just a stage through which we have to pass in order to reach "heaven". Indeed that word is not mentioned in the passage from Pope Paul just quoted; although the fullness of perfect humanity cannot be reached here and now, the supernatural "end" or purpose of our life can give direction and meaning to all our actions and make us more fully human. (See the Vatican Council's decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, nos. 5 & 7, and *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 57.)

It is interesting to see how, in Pope Paul's list of "more human conditions", so many different factors blend together to picture an ordered human development. Moral and religious values are shown as human gain, and this at a time when morality is almost a dirty word and religious truth is looked upon as an unwanted imposition. The social teaching of the Church is chiefly concerned with what we may call the lower rungs of the ladder of human development — the wise and just ordering of social and economic affairs for the benefit of the human person. With much of it everyone could agree. It therefore has its value, not only in itself, but as a preparation for the deeper wisdom of the Gospel. We should heed the call of Pope John in his letter *Mater et Magistra* (1961) to make ourselves familiar with this teaching, spread it abroad and act upon it (nos. 218 - 239).

Among the humanising influences listed by Pope Paul is "the spirit of poverty". This should be the subject of a separate article; but unless we Christians have this Gospel spirit we cannot hope to be of help in weaning our fellow-citizens away from the philosophy of "the more the better". It may be said, however, that I was a little unfair in my opening paragraph in suggesting that the mass of people have such clear-cut attitudes towards material goods. Too often, they are the unconscious victims of an insidious propaganda. As Bishop Fulton Sheen has written :

"In economics, man is a means. Advertising tells him he must keep up with the Jones family, or avoid being unpopular with bad breath. But, in reality, the buyer is only a means to the increase of economic production and profit. It makes no difference whether the brand name has to be changed every few weeks, or something new added; what matters is that the consumer is a happy means towards greater production. The name of the game is: Everything is a Means."

To make a man a means is blasphemy; the Church teaches that everything is for man — and man is for God. All the more reason, then, to make the Church's social teaching known, and to act on it in practice.

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NOTE — *Mater et Magistra* is published by the Catholic Truth Society under the title *New Light on Social Problems* (S 259) at 7½ pence, and *Populorum Progressio* as *The Great Social Problem* (S 273) at 4 pence. *The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the World of Today* of Vatican II, referred to above as *Gaudium et Spes*, is Do. 363 and costs 12½ pence.

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## Arbitrary Powers in Ireland

"It is impossible that the inhabitants of such a country labouring under coercion, inflicted from such a quarter and inflicted in opposition to the authentic voice which the Constitution itself has given them, can be brought into sympathy with the law and that respect for the law without which there can be no true political stability and no true social civilisation." Mr. Gladstone's judgment on arbitrary powers in Ireland in 1893 has withstood the test of time. He was right then; he is right now.

# International Financial Crisis

J. M. JACKSON

THERE have been rare occasions when I have found it difficult to think of a subject for my article. This is certainly not one of these occasions. If there is a problem it is not to think of *a* subject but *which*. Many aspects of the Industrial Relations Act remain to be considered, important white papers have been published on the finance of housing in England and Wales and in Scotland. Meantime, there has been an important development on the international economic scene. The United States has ended the free convertibility of the dollar into gold at a fixed price and imposed a surcharge of 10 per cent on imports. Most economists have been aware for a long time of the weakness of the American economy. To many laymen, however, these emergency measures will no doubt come as a considerable shock. For years the American economy has been thought of as one of the strongest in the world, and the dollar has been regarded as one of the most acceptable of currencies, the one against which all others have been measured. What, then, has gone wrong? What does this new development mean for other countries, particularly for Britain?

## *The Balance of Payments*

The British balance of payments, as most people know only too well, has frequently been in deficit in post-war years. We should not exaggerate this, however. Our overseas investments which had been run down to pay for the war have been very largely replaced if not more

than replaced. If there have been recurrent crises and deficits, there have also been periods of surplus in which we have built up our ownership of foreign assets. The British man in the street has not heard so much about the problem of the American balance of payments, and perhaps still thinks of the United States as having a balance of payments surplus as it had in the early post-war years. In fact the United States has been in deficit on the balance of payments for a long time. Nevertheless, until recently its balance of payments problem has been very different in nature from that which has faced Britain. A comparison of the two balance of payments problems is quite revealing.

For simplicity we may think of a country's international financial dealings coming under the following headings:

- a) visible trade — the export of goods which can be seen and handled;
- b) invisible trade — or trade in services (banking insurance) and tourist expenditures;
- c) government expenditures in other countries — such as the cost to Britain of maintaining forces in Germany or local expenditures incurred by the United States in the prosecution of the war in Vietnam;
- d) capital expenditures, whether in the form of acquiring shares in foreign companies or expenditure by, for example, British companies setting up factories abroad;
- e) movements of gold and currency.

The first two items make up the balance of trade. Traditionally Britain has had a deficit on the balance of visible trade. We have usually bought more goods from abroad than we have sold. This deficit on visible trade has usually been more than offset by a surplus on invisibles. That is, we have usually provided more in the way of services to foreigners in shipping, banking, insurance and so on than foreigners have provided for us. Out of any net surplus on the overall balance of



trade must come the money to pay for any British government expenditure overseas (which normally exceeds any expenditure here by other governments) and the cost of any net British investment abroad. If net government expenditure and net investment overseas exceeds the surplus on the balance of trade, the overall deficit has to be met by disposing of some of our reserves of gold and foreign exchange.\*

The United States has until very recently had a considerable surplus on its visible trade account. The Americans were accustomed to selling far more goods abroad than they bought from foreigners. In the years after the last war the Americans enjoyed a considerable overall surplus on their balance of payments. These were the years when most countries were suffering from the ravages of war and only America could supply the goods which were in demand. The overall surplus on the balance of payments also enabled the United States to invest abroad on a large scale. American companies were able to buy foreign enterprises or to build their own overseas plants. This American overseas investment has often been on a scale that has alarmed European countries. Whilst the flow of dollars from such investment has helped countries with their balance of payments problems, the acquisition of large sectors of the European economy by American interests has been accompanied by a fear that circumstances could arise where the policy of American subsidiaries in Europe would be conducted without regard for the national interests of the countries in which they operated. There could be an acute problem, for example, in the British car industry where only British - Leyland is a British company and Ford, Vauxhall (General Motors) and Chrysler are all American owned.

\* A deficit may also be met in part by an increase in short term lending by foreigners. In other words, we simply become indebted to the people who have supplied us with goods and services. This is very similar to an individual who overspends his income in a particular month but has done so by getting some of his purchases on credit. It is in many ways more logical to include changes in short-term indebtedness of this kind with gold and currency movements and to think of capital movements as referring to long-term plans.

Gradually the overall surplus on the American balance of payments diminished and the United States moved into overall deficit. The balance of visible trade remained strongly in surplus, but other items in the accounts went into deficit. There has probably always been a deficit on invisibles, the expenditure of American tourists being a big item here. Government expenditure overseas has increased. The cost of maintaining troops in Germany continued, aid to various countries continued, and the costs of the Vietnam war escalated. At the same time, American companies continued to invest abroad. Normally, a country can only invest abroad if it can achieve a surplus on the other items in its balance of payments. It is out of this surplus that the investing country pays for the shares it acquires in foreign companies or for the cost of erecting a factory in the foreign country.

### *The Role of the Dollar*

How then did the Americans manage to maintain their overseas investment? How did they pay for the assets they were acquiring all over the world? The answer lies in the role of the dollar as a reserve currency. For so many years the dollar had been a desired currency *because* America offered the goods that people wanted. Even when a country did not want to buy from the United States it would always be willing to accept dollars in payment for its own exports because it knew that a country supplying imports would be ready to accept dollars in payment. This willingness to accept dollars in payment continued even after the United States balance of payments went into overall deficit. The United States was becoming increasingly indebted to foreigners, but the foreigners were still content to accept dollar IOUs and to exchange them among themselves as a means of payment.\*

The use of the dollar as a means of international

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\* The shortage of international liquidity or means of international payment is only a partial explanation of why the dollar remained acceptable as a means of payment.

payment was not willingly accepted by all countries. France in particular was bitterly opposed to the use of the dollar in this way, and favoured an increase in the price of gold. If all countries had increased the price of gold the value of one currency in terms of another would have remained the same, but the value of the gold stock would have doubled in terms of money and, assuming unchanged prices of other goods, in terms also of goods in general. The world stock of gold would therefore have gone a lot further and there would have been no need to rely on the dollar IOUs created by the American balance of payments deficit as a means of payment and the United States would have been forced to live within its means instead of continuing to buy up European enterprises and conduct a war in the Far East without paying the cost. Part of the French complaint against the United States was undoubtedly valid, though the change in the price of gold was far from a sensible proposal. It is a scheme that would have benefitted the French, who had shamelessly hoarded gold, and South Africa and the USSR who were gold producers.

The final stage in the United States balance of payments deterioration has been the emergence of a deficit on the balance of visible trade. The immediate post war position where the American economy was pre-eminent has changed. Germany and Japan especially have emerged as serious competitors in international trade, both in neutral markets where American firms had once dominated the scene and even in the American home market. A point was reached where people were beginning to lose confidence in the dollar and were speculating against it. They were selling their holdings of dollars and acquiring other currencies which they believed were stronger than the dollar and likely therefore to increase in value against the dollar. Such speculation against the pound has often been an important part in a balance of payments crisis. As holdings of sterling have been run down by speculators, we have had to pay out in gold or foreign exchange and our

reserves have been run dangerously low. So recently it has been with the dollar.

### *Unfair to America*

The Americans feel that they have been unfairly treated, particularly by the Common Market countries and Japan. The Common Market is, of course, a customs union, a grouping of countries which abandon customs barriers between themselves but continue to maintain a common tariff against the rest of the world. This has naturally meant that Common Market countries increasingly buy the goods they need from their trading partners rather than from countries outside the market, and the United States has felt the impact of this. Japan has emerged as an important trading nation in many spheres—photographic equipment, shipbuilding and the motor industry to mention only a few. Americans feel that Japan is intent on building up its export trade without any willingness to buy from other countries. Should a country that has a surplus on its balance of payments over a long period be willing to take steps to eliminate this surplus, or should the responsibility for adjustment rest entirely with the countries that are in deficit?

This is not an easy question to answer. I am inclined to take the general view that adjustment should be the responsibility of both debtor and creditor nations. International agreements have limited the freedom of countries to adjust the exchange values of their currencies (though this obligation has been more honoured in the breach than the observance), and similarly the freedom to alter tariffs has been limited (though again disregarded by both Britain and the United States). This has meant that the principal means of remedying a balance of payments deficit has been deflation with the resulting increase in the level of unemployment.

When the burden of adjustment is placed upon the country experiencing a balance of payments deficit the process of adjustment is as follows. The country is forced

to take measures which involve a reduction of the level of income in the country. In practice, the aggregate level of income is reduced by lowering the level of unemployment, so that the burden of adjustment is not borne equally by all. With falling incomes, people spend less, and part of the reduced spending is on imports. It is this reduced spending on imported goods that restores the balance of payments to a healthier condition.

It would not be unreasonable to place the burden of adjustment on the debtor country when the latter is running a balance of payments deficit because the level of economic activity has been forced too high. A situation may be created where there is virtually no unemployment *and there is also a large number of unfilled jobs*. Wages may be forced up by the shortage of labour and with high incomes there is a strong demand for consumer goods. Home industry may be unable to meet this demand and goods have to be imported to fill the gap; or goods that would normally have been exported are diverted to the home market.\* This, however, is not the present American situation. There is unemployment in the United States. If those countries enjoying balance of payments surpluses were to initiate expansionary moves, a reverse of the process just described would occur. Employment and demand in the creditor countries would increase and part of the increase in demand would be for imports. Unfortunately, there is nothing except a sense of responsibility to make creditor countries undertake expansionist policies whereas sooner or later the loss of gold and foreign exchange will force debtor countries to take action.

### *The Future of Exchange Rates*

The action taken by the United States has created a situation whereby the system of fixed exchange rates which has been in existence since the end of the war has been

\* Exports may also rise at high levels of income because the *kind* of goods required with increasing prosperity happen to be those supplied by foreign producers. The growing demand for foreign holidays is one example.



ended. Already some countries, notably Canada, had allowed their exchange rate to float, but now major currencies like the dollar, the pound, the mark and the yen are being allowed to find their own levels relatively to each other in the foreign exchange markets. It would be rash to attempt to forecast whether this will continue or whether there will sooner or later be a return to fixed exchange rates but at a new parity\* What is more important is that we should see what is involved in floating exchange rates.

We are familiar with devaluation. When the pound was changed from a parity of £ = \$2.80 to £ = \$2.40, it meant that an article produced in Britain and costing £100 would fall in price in America from \$280 to \$240. The British exporter would still receive £100 but the American importer would need \$40 less to obtain £100 on the foreign exchange market. Similarly, it can be seen that to buy an American article, the British importer needed to pay a higher price in terms of sterling. Thus British exports tended to rise because they were cheaper and imports to fall because they had become dearer. Floating exchange rates merely mean that the exchange rates between currencies are allowed to move freely in response to market forces instead of being subject to large but rare alteration when governments so decide. If a country is in balance of payments deficit, it will require foreign currencies to pay for imports. It will offer its own currency, but this will obviously be in abundant supply compared with foreign currencies. Therefore its value in terms of the other currencies will tend to fall, and the effects of devaluation will be felt, but on a modest scale since the movement in the exchange rates is likely to be small.\* The major disadvantage of floating exchange rates is that they introduce an element of uncertainty into

\* A major problem here is that most currencies were fixed in terms of the dollar. If the dollar continued to be the measuring rod, a change in the value of the dollar implies a change in *all* other currency values. All countries might not choose to alter the exchange rates for their currencies and this might cause difficulties.

\* The movement is small because it is likely to occur much quicker than devaluation which is only resorted to in a major crisis.

foreign trade. A firm enters into a contract to buy goods from abroad. A British firm may be committed to paying for these goods, say, \$100 each. What it does not know is how much it will have to pay in sterling because it does not know until the time comes for payment what the exchange rate between the dollar and sterling will be.\*\*

As a result of the floating of currencies, the pound has in fact risen relatively to the dollar. This, together with the surcharge on imports will make it more difficult for Britain to sell in America. We should not be too worried. If balance of payments difficulties emerge, the pound will fall in value again and our competitive position improve. Countries with strong balance of payments positions, like Germany and Japan, would find their currencies remained at a higher value compared with the dollar and would therefore continue to find greater difficulty in selling to America — just what is required to restore the American balance of payments situation.

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\*\* This must not be overemphasised. It may be possible to 'buy forward'. This means agreeing now to buy dollars at a future date at a fixed price. This may be more than would have to be paid on the 'spot' market at the time, but at least the trader would know where he stood. In any case, although there is a good chance with floating rates that some loss (or gain) may be made as a result of a change in the exchange rate, with 'fixed' rates there is a smaller chance of a loss (or gain) but if there is one it will be much greater.

### Renewal Reminder

December is a very busy month for renewing subscriptions for *Christian Order*. It will help greatly if those whose subscriptions fall due in November renew promptly.

Is the present eclipse of religious life likely to be permanent? Catechisms are out and nothing has taken their place. Why can't the bishops provide an orthodox summary of the Faith? Does the search for "consensus" as a preliminary to action in religion fit in with a right idea of authority and obedience?

## Any Questions?

WILLIAM LAWSON, S.J.

Is the present eclipse of religious life likely to be permanent?

"Eclipse", meaning what? Has religious life fallen into obscurity? It is more in the limelight than ever before. It is NEWS! The producers of television programmes, editors of newspapers, and all the controllers of communication to the masses, are well aware of the modern interest in religion. Material plenty is unsatisfying, and man looks for some reality which will spiritualize his affluence. Once he has become aware of the men and women who try to follow Christ according to the counsels of the Gospel, he is willing to learn about their way of life. He is also ready to criticize, and, in the ordinary human manner, to enjoy reading about accidents and failures, and to gloat over scandals.

Priests and religious have recently provided plenty of newsworthy scandals; and some of them have even sought publicity in an attempt at self-justification. Failures in those high callings are to be pitied, and it is sad that scandal should be given; but the present turmoil in religious life is an indication that religious life is necessary to the Church and cannot be snuffed out. The Holy Spirit is the life of the Church, and where the Spirit of Christ

breathes men and women will dedicate themselves wholly to Him for His work of redemption. They, under the Popes and the bishops, will undertake the main work of evangelization, they will bring initiative, courage and stamina to the apostolate, and will present ideal Christianity as a sign to the world. When the Second Vatican Council invited us all to renew our Christian life and assume our full responsibility as Christians, the religious orders accepted the invitation — more sincerely and effectively, I think, than any other body in the Church. Whatever happens to this Order or that, religious life will not fail — it is rooted in the Gospel.

**Faithful Catholics are being shamefully neglected. Catechisms are out, for the teaching of religion, and nothing trustworthy has taken their place. Why can't the bishops provide an orthodox summary of Catholic doctrine ?**

There is always "an orthodox summary of Catholic doctrine" — the Credo of the People of God, issued by Pope Paul VI. If you wanted, you could find the heads of belief in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. For yourself, you could stick to the Catechism that you learned before catechisms went out: it is still a trustworthy précis of doctrine, and you can recall its teaching when you wish to assess for orthodoxy the modern theological speculations that come your way.

The rejection of catechisms is not an attack on the purity of the Church's teaching. It is a healthy disapproval of a pedagogical method which *could* teach children a jingle of words without an understanding of what they mean (but which good teachers have always been able to use for the conveying of knowledge of the content of faith). What is wanted now is the union of sound doctrine and a method which gets it over into minds and hearts. Some schools of catechetics seem to suppose that their function is to criticize traditional doctrine; and they do much harm. Happily good positive teaching abounds.

There are two excellent books in the St. Paul Editions: *The Catechism of Modern Man*, all in the words of Vatican II and related documents, about 800 pages, and costing £3; and *The Faith we Live by*, and *The Teacher's Guide for Discussions*, both together over 400 pages and costing £1.63. The Italian Bishops' Conference has just published *Renewal of Catechetics*, and the English edition of *The General Catechetical Directory* by the Sacred Congregation of the Clergy will soon be out.

**Does the search for "consensus" as a preliminary to action in religion fit in with a right idea of authority and obedience?**

It can, and it should, fit in very well. St. Paul prays: "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ's", and, time and again, he begs his Christians to be "of one mind" or "of the same mind". When we are gathered together in the name of Christ, as we are in the Church, He is in our midst. We have received His Spirit and the gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and, above all, love. We are all trying to do the will of God. With those bonds of union, we should be able to come to agreement in essentials. Disagreement in non-essentials does not matter much, precisely because they are non-essentials.

There could, however, be a grave dislocation of right government if "consensus" were misunderstood, by being required in fields where it has no place or by being made an essential condition of action. We receive Christ's teaching from Him and His absolute authority: we do not vote on it first, to see if it is acceptable. We respect and defer to the universal jurisdiction of the Pope and the bishop's jurisdiction in his territory, whether they consult us beforehand or not.

In religious life, if that is what you mean by "religion", consensus has been aimed at by religious founders and foundresses, and the search for it has been prescribed in many Rules. But, though that gives guidance in the



exercise of both authority and obedience, the attainment of consensus or its non-attainment is over before authority and obedience come into play. Government in Church and religious orders is not by democratic majorities and by referendums. They should be duly weighed but they do not make the decisions. Consensus is not a substitute for the Superior.

Most Catholics would deplore much of the permissiveness of modern society, but is there not a danger of going too far in the opposite direction? Surely there is no objection to open showers or nude swimming if only men or women are present? Could even mixed nude bathing be permitted — possibly limited to the family or to groups of married couples?

The cult of nudity is an obstinate assertion of a manifest untruth — that human beings are meant to go about naked. All animals except man are subject to the conditions in which they live, and they grow fur and feathers or hard skins as a protection against heat and cold. Man is superior to his natural surroundings because he can bring art to the making of clothes.

He needs them. They are not an encumbrance forced upon him by an unhealthy convention. He needs them in the arctic, at the equator, and in the zones called temperate. Without them he would be assailed by flies, fleas, mosquitoes, horse-flies, leeches, mites and ants. If the world were one vast garden of Eden, nakedness might be the normal human condition; but we do not live in that golden age, and the effects of original sin are inescapable. Apart from the sinfulness against which we must be shielded by modesty, there is in human beings generally a lack of bodily beauty which is better clothed than bare. Wild animals have the strength and the proportions which belong to their kind, because only the fittest survive; but the unfit of the human race are not eliminated by natural selection. To think that we are

unreasonably barred from nudity is to be blind to the reasons, moral, aesthetic and climatic, which persuade us to be clothed and in our right mind.

### **What is the Church's judgment of the miserable summers we have been reduced to ?**

You will find the answer in warnings given by the Popes from Pius XII onwards, against irresponsible, ignorant tampering with nature and its forces. Arrogance is always dangerous. In a scientist, and at this stage of scientific progress, it threatens to do irreparable damage to the human race. The Popes have many times urged a decent humility in the face of nature, so that scientific discoveries may be used with respect for the order in the universe, and so that mere technological skills may not be employed just because they have been acquired — they should be in the service of man, to liberate and not to enslave him. The exploitation of natural resources is good only if it benefits mankind.

The two chief sins of scientific (and commercial) arrogance are the fouling of man's natural environment and the upsetting of the natural balance in the universe by snatching an immediate benefit in disregard of long-term ills. Everybody knows now about pollution, but there is yet no adequate check to it. Forecasts of universal drought or lack of oxygen receive the same inattention as appeals to keep picnic places free of litter. A similar unconcern is shown for the second display of arrogance — interference in natural processes without adequate knowledge of the interplay of natural forces and the order which results from it. The result is disorder.

And so to your miserable summers ! Whether or not they are wetter than in the good old days, it is certain that technology can alter the weather. It already affects temperature, the winds, ocean currents and earthquakes. It bears some resemblance to a moron or a vandal poking about with a screw-driver in delicate mechanism; and the Church's warning should be heeded.

# Book Reviews

## THE NEW BARBARIANS

**The Gods of Atheism** by Vincent P. Miceli, S.J.; Arlington House (81, Centre Avenue, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801, U.S.A.), \$12.50; pp. 490.

**Trousered Apes** by Duncan Williams; Churchill Press Ltd. (2 Cecil Court, London Road, Enfield, Middlesex) for Constitutional Book Club; pp. 133.

My eye was caught not long ago by two items of news on the same page of a daily paper. I was revolted by what I read. At the same time, I was fascinated, for the items stood in illustration of a point made with extreme effectiveness by the two books under review. It is that "the Western World and its culture are saturated with violence and animalism".

The quotation is from Duncan Williams. He shows effectively in his short essay how the literature of the period both reflects and stimulates the barbarism of the times in which we live. Father Vincent Miceli's vast volume traces today's barbarism back to its source in a long line of atheistic philosophers. The story is a grim one. We have not yet seen its finish, which will be grimmer still, I fear. Let us go back now to the news items.

First, the Art Spectrum exhibition at Crystal Palace last August. It aroused controversy. Exhibits ranged 'from a vast grinning caricature of the Prime Minister, with a yellow face resembling Donald Duck wearing a sailor's cap, to crudely painted pictures of the sex act. One of the highlights is a tarpaulin-covered shack built of old doors and packing cases and surrounded by an extraordinary collection of litter, including rotten bananas, rusty door locks, empty food cans, jam jars and soft drink

bottles". By way of explanation, the twenty-nine-year-old organiser, Mr. John Kitcher, said: "The object of the exhibition is to be a spectrum of what professional artists are doing in London today. If some of the works are obscene, it is a reflection of the way certain artists feel". This, presumably, is sufficient justification: if what I do is what I feel, all is well. Fulfilment is explosion any way I choose to explode. This is Sartre at the grass roots. The accent on violence and animalism in contemporary literature and in the visual arts is indicative of the way the explosion is going. Art Spectrum is by no means an isolated case. Fulfilment is sought in the violence done to others through the shock that perversion of right order brings. The degradation of true values becomes the hall-mark of contemporary *avant-garde* art. It is the driving force behind the Theatre of the Absurd. This, I would submit, is the new barbarism. It is Attila the Hun riding down on the remains of civilization. Unlike that of Attila, however, contemporary barbarism is cumulative, for its power to shock is self-consuming:

"What shocks an audience today will be acceptable tomorrow", writes Duncan Williams, "and thus the contemporary dramatist is constantly impelled to seek further excesses to gratify a warped taste which he has himself implanted in the public mind.

"Shall tomorrow's playwright boldly depict males embracing on the stage? It has already been done in Osborne's *A Patriot for Me*. Shall we have a man publicly castrate himself? Genet's *The Balcony* has anticipated him. Shall he display a woman urinating on the stage? Picasso's *Le Desir Attrapé par la Queue* has forestalled him. Shall he stage his play in a lunatic asylum, a public urinal, a brothel? All such localities have already been exploited. The possible avenues for original obscenity and scatology are one by one being cut off, and one wonders how the jaded theatrical palates of the future will be titillated. The contemporary playwright or producer might well take

as his motto, "*Après moi, la sécheresse*", and congratulate himself that he is writing before a morbid public appetite demands scenes of such repellant realism that actors and actresses will have to be killed on the stage in order to satisfy it."

inevitably, the Theatre of the Absurd extends itself into the Theatre of Cruelty. The step from the kitchen sink to the gladiatorial show is far shorter than most imagine.

Meanwhile there is mounting violence in the football stadium, the modern equivalent of the Roman Arena. Sportsmanship has faded and instinctive animalism risen to urge increasing violence on spectators and players alike. The second item of news on the same page as that carrying the controversy over Art Spectrum, spoke of maximum sentences being imposed on youths responsible for violent incidents at two Midlands soccer matches. Fulfilment, once again, through the thrill that comes through a physical and partisan perversion of right order; animal assault on others differing only in degree from that which characterised the depraved brutes in charge of Hitler's concentration camps: apes in trousers, all of them. Expression alone distinguishes it from that endemic in contemporary art and communications.

For the genesis of it all and a great deal more besides in our very sick society Father Miceli is a surer guide than Duncan Williams. The reason lies not so much in the length of his exegesis, with its far greater detail. It is to be found in the firmness of Father Miceli's belief in God, which enables him to show by contrast and with great clarity the fate man is bound to take to himself if he rejects God and makes himself the measure of all things. To do this, of course, is to reject his dependence on God. Thereby, man sets himself the impossible task of finding fulfilment in independence of God, within his own self-sufficiency. This can only mean the assertion of himself at the expense of others, levelling them down that he may come up, as part of a more general process that pulls down and degrades anything outside would-be self-



sufficient man that reminds him of his insufficiency. Man without God, therefore, is necessarily an egalitarian and a destroyer. He cannot bear excellence outside himself, is happy only in a mob of others like himself, is possessed of only one ambition, which is, eventually, to put them under himself. For the equality he prescribes is a bogus thing. It does not include himself. He would have all men equal, only that he may make himself more equal than all the others. He preys on their desire to remove all inequality as a constriction on liberty — only that he may make himself more equal than all the others. The germ of the totalitarianism endemic in all godlessness is there: all should be naked in order that he alone may wear clothes. Pius XII saw it clearly long ago. "In God alone", he said to Austrian Catholics in 1949, "is man free. If he abandons God he delivers himself into the hands of totalitarian regimes".

The animal equalitarianism of the present is, of course, quite without staying-power. Its only expression is anarchy which is, by nature, self-destructive. After it, comes the man on the horse. And a Communist, in all probability, will be in the saddle. The reason is clear. For your avant-garde unbeliever of today is only a mini-Stalin however polished his charm and quick his wit. His striving being always to make his micro-world in his image, his admiration must be reserved, however, subconsciously, for the Communist who is succeeding so well today in making a whole world in his. When the time comes, then, the take-over will come. The need is only to wait and none knows how to wait better than your International Communist himself. He is not a believer in frontal assault without need and he knows that, here, the necessity for it does not arise. He waits for the rot to work to its conclusion from within. Then he will come. When he does, it will be too late.

The task before us is clear. It is to pre-empt this appalling happening which would be the end of us all the death-knell of a society already close to its death.

throes. A few years ago one would have looked automatically to the Church, the rock of truth, for deliverance. One still looks, whilst noting with intense sadness the weakness that has overtaken her; the weakness that has come as those who should have been the first to uphold the truth have themselves been infected with something close to the godless subjectivism of contemporary unbelief. By some awful and ironic quirk the Church is being urged at present by the self-appointed prophets in her midst to accommodate herself to contemporary trends — at the very moment when their futility is increasingly apparent to all. She should be standing against the arid pointlessness of the present. Instead, the progressive minority within her midst is urging her to clothe her message, which is for all men at all times, in the discarded wrappings of yesterday's empty creeds. Pathetically, its members do not recognise them as belonging to yesterday: hence the appearance of tremulous indecision given to the Church as a whole by those who, in their arrogance, have taken upon themselves to speak for her. "Catholics in this country", wrote Peter de Rosa in a prepared statement when he left the priesthood, "can be assured that in the view of most of their theologians throughout the world the present official policy of the Church (over birth control, as set out in *Humanae Vitae*) is not fully or finally representative of the mind of the Church". With respect, this is tosh. All that matters, so far as Catholics are concerned, is not what the theologians have to say, but what supreme authority in the Church has to teach on matters of faith or morals. In the case of birth control, this has been made abundantly clear by the Holy Father in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, published in the summer of 1968. In the words of Msgr. Lambruschini, in comment to Associated Press at the time, "All those who live in recent years incautiously taught that it is lawful to use artificial contraceptive to regulate births and have acted accordingly in their pastoral guidance and in the ministry of the confessional, must now change their

*attitude* and set an example by their *full acceptance* of the teaching of the Encyclical. This is not a case of servility to be shunned, but rather one of essential loyalty and consistency in the profession of Catholic doctrine and in the practice of the Christian life . . . " (*italics supplied*).

The Church is losing friends and many are losing confidence in her as a result of the appearance of weakness and indecision brought to the expression of true doctrine through the arrogance of progressive theologians. At a time when she is most needed she seems least able to give men the comfort they crave. The reason is that she is under assault from within, being betrayed by those who should be foremost in their defence of the truth of God, which she holds in her hands. The Church has had moments as bad in her history. I doubt whether she has ever had worse. A first step to recovery lies in the simple realization of this hard fact. It will be well under way when prayer takes over to build where faith alone can lay foundations.

Paul Crane, S.J.

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### When we Consider

"When we consider the succession of ages during which the Catholic system has endured, the severity of the trials it has undergone, the sudden changes without and within which have befallen it, the incessant mental activity and the intellectual gifts of its maintainers, the enthusiasm which it has kindled, the fury of the controversies which have been carried on among its professors, the impetuosity of the assaults made upon it, the ever-increasing responsibilities to which it has been committed by the continuous development of its dogmas, it is quite inconceivable that it should not have been broken and lost, were it a corruption of Christianity" (*Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 437-38, J. H. Newman).